UNITED
NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the
Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/SR.250
14 November 1995

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Tenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 250th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 9 November 1995, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mrs. EUFEMIO

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PORTUGAL

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GE.95-19497 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 4) (continued)

Portugal (CRC/C/3/Add.30; CRC/C.10/WP.4)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. de Santa Clara Gomes, Mrs. Gersão, Mr. Abreu de Lemos, Mrs. Clemente, Mr. Gomes Pedro, Mrs. Bras Gomes and Mrs. Baptista Lopes (Portugal) took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. de SANTA CLARA GOMES (Portugal) said he expected that a great deal would be learned from the upcoming dialogue. The fact that the members of the Committee came from a wide variety of regions and backgrounds was a great advantage. The Committee's comments and suggestions would surely be helpful to Portugal as it sought to carry out its policy on children and to implement the Convention. The members of his delegation, for their part, would do their utmost to supplement the report and answer the questions asked by the members of the Committee. He apologized for the late submission of the report, which was largely attributable to the very recent change in Government.

3. The report had been prepared with contributions from several ministries and attempted to provide a true picture of the situation of children in Portugal. Reality was always more complex than any oral or written descriptions, however, and that was why, as the Committee discussed the report, it should keep in mind a number of factors that affected the existence of Portuguese children.

4. Portugal was a medium-sized European country with a population of 10 million. Its culture dated back to antiquity and it had long had a tradition of humanism and openness to other cultures which gave it a uniquely broad perspective. Its geographical and political contours had been unchanged for the past 700 years, longer than any other European nation. That was a source of pride to Portuguese citizens and explained their society's continuity and deep sense of tradition.

5. Rapid economic, social and political changes had taken place in recent years. In 1974, a democratic regime had been installed and, since 1985, Portugal had been a member of the European Union. The economic growth rate had been accelerated, accompanied by a number of social changes, not always for the better. Formerly an agrarian society, Portugal was now predominantly urban in its social structure. The extended, large family had been replaced by smaller, nuclear family units. Per capita income was about US$ 11,000, and that meant that, although it was a developed country, Portugal was among the least developed States of Europe. Economic growth had made for a considerable increase in funding for educational, health and social welfare services, spurring rapid changes in those sectors.

6. As the country had moved towards democracy, economic strength and social restructuring, citizens had acquired a greater awareness of their rights. They expected far more from their Government and were increasingly capable of

criticizing its decisions. That was one of the reasons why, the Socialist Party had been chosen to replace the previous Government in the October 1995 elections. There was a feeling that that Government, while concentrating on economic development, had sacrificed social concerns. The newly appointed administration was now presenting its programme to Parliament and one of its salient features was an emphasis on social cohesion. A new Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security had been created to give added impetus to efforts to unify Portuguese society. Following the increase in the quantity of services provided in the educational, health and social spheres, moreover, greater emphasis was now to be placed on the quality of such services. The reforms achieved so far were to be consolidated. More attention would be paid to the needs and rights of the individual, as opposed to the economic concerns of the consumer.

7. Because the structure of society had gone from agrarian to urban, there was a need to reinforce sectors other than the Government that could provide support. Compared with other European countries, Portugal was deficient in the private and non-governmental organizations that could interpret the wishes of citizens. The Government was aware of the problem and planned to encourage the growth of such organizations.

8. The Portuguese nation had existed for 850 years and that helped to account for the strong links among its residents. Despite all the changes that had taken place in recent years, including those in the structure of the family, Portugal had retained its character as a compassionate society. That could not be discerned from statistics or legislation, but the interrelations of members of society attested to it. For example, following the decolonization process, over 1 million foreign citizens, primarily from Africa, had settled in Portugal, yet they had been assimilated with minimal trauma and surprising rapidity.

9. He hoped that, with that introduction, Committee members now had a sense of the fluidity and flavour of Portuguese life.

10. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Portuguese delegation to provide information on the questions the Committee had asked in connection with the section of the list of issues (CRC/C.10/WP.4) entitled "General measures of implementation", which read:

"General measures of implementation
(Arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6, of the Convention)

1. Please provide clarification on the status of the Convention in relation to national law. Can the provisions of the Convention be invoked in court and have they been taken into account in judicial decisions?

2. Please provide information on the measures taken to improve mechanisms for collecting statistical data and other necessary information about the status of children to enable the Government to monitor the implementation of the Convention and as a basis for designing programmes for the rights of the child.

3. What measures have been taken or are envisaged to incorporate education about the Convention in training or re-training programmes for professionals working with or for children such as teachers, social workers and judges?

4. In view of the recent adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 48/184 proclaiming the United Nations Decade of Human Rights Education, has the Government considered the possibility of using this opportunity to incorporate education about the Convention into school curricula?

5. Please describe the steps taken to implement article 4 concerning the obligation of the State to undertake measures to implement economic, social and cultural rights to the maximum extent of available resources. Please indicate what proportion of the official budget at both central and local levels is allocated to social priorities for children. What indicators or target figures are used in this context?

6. Please provide information on what measures are being taken or envisaged to ensure effective coordination between local, regional and national entities dealing with children's issues. Furthermore, please provide more details of the powers, status, functions and activities of the "Provedor de Justiça" (Ombudsman) in so far as the implementation of the Convention is concerned.

7. To what extent is international cooperation designed to foster the implementation of the Convention?"

11. Mrs. BAPTISTA LOPES (Portugal), explaining the status of the Convention in relation to domestic legislation, said the Convention had hierarchical superiority over national law. The Constitution provided for automatic acceptance of international conventions and treaties; their provisions were directly incorporated into domestic legislation and could be invoked by and before the courts. The Convention on the Rights of the Child had been frequently cited in the proceedings of courts of first instance, usually to reinforce the provisions of domestic law relating to the primacy of the interests of the child.

12. Mrs. GERSÃO (Portugal) said that no statistics had been compiled with specific reference to the Convention, but data was collected regularly and published yearly in a number of disciplines, including health, education, social security and economics. The initial report before the Committee was probably lacking in statistical material compared with what the Committee would have desired. That was partially attributable to Portugal's lack of experience in preparing reports for the Committee and to a slight professional bias among the report writers, who were mostly drawn from the legal profession and whose main concern had been to analyse the alignment of domestic legislation with the Convention. In future, an effort would be made to compile statistics expressly relating to the Convention and it was hoped that a working group on follow-up to the Convention could be established.

13. A number of steps had been taken to disseminate information about the Convention, but more could be done. Initial training courses for

professionals who worked with children in such sectors as health, education, social services and the judiciary did not refer expressly to that instrument, although some instructors brought it up spontaneously in the course of their work. It was in continuing education, however, that the Convention was more often mentioned, perhaps because the content of such courses was more flexible than that of initial training courses.

14. Mr. ABREU DE LEMOS (Portugal) said that the subject of the Convention was not in fact specifically included in the curriculum of teacher training courses. However, the Framework Act on the Education System, adopted in 1986, gave a broad outline of how the right of the child to education was to be implemented. The basic principles defined in the Act also applied to the curricula of training courses for teachers and university lecturers. A grant from the European Union had been used to fund a programme for further training for teachers and many of the initiatives under that programme included a component relating to the rights of the child. In addition, training colleges organized regular seminars for teachers on how the provisions of the Convention should be implemented.

15. Mr. de SANTA CLARA GOMES (Portugal), replying to question 4, said that, in 1989, there had been a reform of the school curriculum which had now been put into effect in some 70 schools in Portugal and was to be extended to all schools in the near future. The emphasis of the reform on good citizenship, respect for others and equality of opportunity was in line with the principles of the Convention.

16. Mr. ABREU DE LEMOS (Portugal), replying to question 5, said that, in 1987, the period for compulsory basic schooling had been extended from 6 to 9 years. The Prime Minister had recently announced that education would be one of the Government's highest priorities. Thus, there was to be a 1 per cent increase in the budget for education by 1999 and pre-school education, which at present was only available to 30 per cent of children of pre-school age, was to be expanded to cover nearly 100 per cent of children of that age group by the same year. The Minister of Education had stressed the need for all sectors of society to share responsibility for education within the framework of a "Pact for Education".

17. Mrs. CLEMENTE (Portugal) said high priority was being given to meeting the needs of children placed in care by a court order. Eight hundred and fifty minors were currently in the care of establishments under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice which included reception centres, training centres and residential homes. The cost to the State of those establishments was 2,900,000 Portuguese contos, or a per capita cost of over 3,000 contos, per year.

18. In 1949, only 45 per cent of children in such establishments had received compulsory education. Most of them were at least nine years of age and, because of their marginal status, were usually virtually illiterate and often delinquent. Today, however, that percentage had risen to 79 per cent, since there were now far more alternative educational programmes available for children suffering from trauma.

19. Mrs. BRAS GOMES (Portugal) said that one of the primary concerns of the new Government had been to introduce a scheme providing a minimum guaranteed income. A non-contributory social security scheme did exist, but did not cover all those in need. The new scheme was to be administered by the Government working together with local authorities and with private, non-profit-making institutions providing social services; that meant that there would be local involvement in decision-making. Fifty-seven per cent of the social security budget was spent on young people and children, 28 per cent on the elderly, 5 per cent on rehabilitation for the disabled and 10 per cent on the family and the community.

20. Mrs. GERSÃO (Portugal), replying to the question on cooperation between bodies working with children, said that as yet no specific mechanisms for coordination between education services, health services and social services existed in Portugal. However, attitudes had changed greatly in recent years and nowadays the various sectors worked in close collaboration, particularly where projects for children at the local level were concerned.

21. Mr. GOMES PEDRO (Portugal) said that one example of coordination between different government departments in efforts on behalf of children was the Interministerial Programme to Promote Success in School (PIPSE), referred to in paragraph 155 of the report. Another programme entitled "Education for All" was administered jointly by the Ministry for Education and the Ministry of Health and the "Project Life" programme for drug addiction prevention, referred to in paragraph 226, was also based on collaboration between the Ministries of Justice, Education and Health.

22. The Government had announced its intention to give support and encouragement to local education councils, bodies which included representatives of such varied sectors as trade unions, business enterprises and cultural and scientific organizations. In order to make the Ministry of Education better able to respond to local needs, the Department of Education had now been split up into five separate regional branches.

23. Mrs. BRAS GOMES (Portugal) pointed out that, in the field of social security, reorganization at the local level had led to a better integration of policies at the national level.

24. Mrs. GERSÃO (Portugal) said a question had been raised concerning the functions of the Provedor de Justicia, or ombudsman for the rights of the child. A project had recently been set up entitled "Message of the Child", which was a telephone service replying to questions concerning children. There were two other telephone helpline services specifically for children who were victims of ill-treatment or in danger. The ombudsman programme, which had been launched in September 1994, was wider in scope and designed to assist children who believed that their rights were not being respected. The ombudsman received about 30 calls a day on a wide variety of questions.

25. Mrs. BRAS GOMES (Portugal), replying to question 7, said that there had been useful exchanges between Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking African countries where efforts on behalf of children were concerned. Thus, experience gained on a project launched in Portugal to combat social exclusion, which had been partly funded by the European Union, had been

applied in a number of African countries. Nationals of those countries had come to Portugal to follow training courses, while Portuguese experts had gone out to help organize social services and centre-based services for children in the countries concerned.

26. Mr. GOMES PEDRO (Portugal) said that a recent example of international cooperation in the field of children's rights had been the symposium held in Lisbon to draft a declaration on the effects of stress and violence on children. The Declaration called on Governments which had not yet ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child to do so immediately and on those which had done so to establish effective mechanisms for incorporating its articles into national legislation and to develop mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions.

27. Mr. de SANTA CLARA GOMES (Portugal) stressed that Portugal was concerned to promote human rights in general, as well as the rights of the child in particular, as part of its programme of international cooperation. Thus, in 1994, official development assistance (ODA) provided by Portugal had totalled $230 million, some 90 per cent of which had been absorbed by Portuguese-speaking African countries.

28. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the Portuguese delegation for the very full replies it had given to the questions asked.

29. Mrs. SARDENBERG noted that the report dealt mainly with the legal aspects of questions relating to the rights of the child and did not give much information on political and administrative structures in Portugal. However, she was pleased to learn that the Government intended to establish a permanent body to coordinate action on behalf of children. She had noted that associations of professionals concerned with children were being encouraged to play a greater role. Was there any intention to establish a permanent mechanism for consultations with non-governmental organizations on matters related to children and, specifically, on how the Convention was being implemented?

30. With regard to the participation of the Parliament, she referred to the decision, mentioned in paragraph 12 of the report, to carry out an in-depth study of cases in which children were abandoned or subjected to violence and to proceed to a national debate on the subject. She would like to know whether the debate had taken place and if there was a special commission in the Parliament or a group of parliamentarians to work specifically for the rights of children. She also wished to know whether there were specific programmes relating to the implementation of the Convention.

31. Mr. MOMBESHORA said he would like to know the source of funding of local and regional programmes. He assumed that there were two types of programme, those initiated locally and those conducted by various ministries, and he asked whether they depended on grants from the federal Government or whether local authorities had the power to raise funds through taxes or other means.

32. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that one important aspect was that there should be some structure within the Government itself that would review the activities of each of the ministries in a coherent way. Since Portugal seemed to be

considering decentralizing the system and activating local and regional authorities, there should also be some sort of system for reporting, monitoring and coordinating at the vertical level. In that regard, a mediator might have a role to play.

33. Consideration could also be given to a local or regional monitoring system. Efforts should be made to build up an effective system of coordinated and forceful implementation at the various levels. Data should not only be assembled, but also used in such a way as to provoke further discussion. Efforts should be made to integrate the whole approach of the Convention into the code of conduct for professionals in a more comprehensive manner. Professional organizations, paediatricians, social workers' organizations and teachers' organizations could be important actors and should be encouraged to take part and determine what the Convention meant for medical doctors because what was involved was not only article 24 of the Convention and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, but also the approach to the child as seen from the doctors' side.

34. There was a need for cooperation with the civilian sector and integration of the Convention into school curricula. Some countries had found that problematic in a liberal society and the question had arisen on how one could affect people's values without being a big brother. Each society had the means whereby the Government could provide information to the general public, but that required high-level support. One way of dealing with the problem was to examine programmes and to see what related to children. That type of exercise, which had been undertaken in some countries, tended to lead to child-oriented development assistance.

35. Mrs. KARP said she had the impression that there was a disparity between north and south and between rural and urban areas in Portugal. That disparity had implications for education and health and the new Government had the task of reshaping society because the rights of the child were not being dealt with equally. Children in Portugal did not have equal access to health, education and other services and she would like the Portuguese delegation to give more details on Portugal's policy priorities regarding the changes it intended to make.

36. Mr. KOLOSOV said he firmly believed that the change of Government in Portugal should not affect the continuity of national policy with regard to children. It was the Committee's firm belief that the more difficult a transitional period was the more attention should be paid to children's needs. He would welcome information from the Portuguese delegation on the special measures that were being taken in various fields in the current difficult situation. Information should also be provided on the way in which legislation was being implemented.

37. The Convention seemed to repeat the provisions of the International Covenants in many of its articles and children seemed to be covered because those instruments did not discriminate against citizens on the basis of age. However, that was not really true because children's rights were not taken seriously by adults if those rights were not specifically mentioned in all laws. Children themselves thought that the laws relating to human rights

did not apply to them. The legislation that was going to be adopted should, therefore, refer explicitly to children's rights. He would like to know what the Government's intentions were in that regard.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.05 p.m.

38. Mrs. GERSÃO (Portugal) said that there had been some delay in the preparation of the initial report and that it had not been possible to work with non-governmental organizations and all the departments concerned with children. Another commission had prepared the Portuguese report for the World Summit for Children. Her delegation had drawn on those documents, but regretted that it had been unable to work with a more diversified commission, including public services and private institutions, and hoped that, for its next report, it would be able to work in a different manner. An example of the excellent cooperation between NGOs and the public sector was to be found in the area of the protection of children. In that connection, a meeting had been held on the draft Convention on the Rights of the Child at the initiative of UNICEF and the Portuguese committee for UNICEF.

39. The commission which had prepared the report for the World Summit for Children had submitted a proposal to the Government on a permanent system for the follow-up to the Convention, but the proposal had not been accepted. A suggestion which had been made at the initiative of the Socialist Party and which had been adopted by all parties in Parliament was that a university research institute should carry out a study on child victims of ill-treatment. The first part of the study had been completed and related to the Lisbon area. A meeting was to be held with a parliamentary commission to prepare the second part of the study, which would cover the entire country.

40. Mr. ABREU DE LEMOS (Portugal) said that there were two levels in Portuguese administration concerned with the financing of projects for children. The central level had its own projects and paid for them. At the local level, the local authorities received funds from the Government which accounted for about 17 per cent of the budget and could be used for specific local programmes. There were also European social funds and development funds. With those funds, the central administration or local authorities could expand education and health infrastructures. A new regional level was to be set up within a few years. It was too early to indicate how it would work and which funds would be made available to it.

41. The Ministry of Education had reorganized its structures in order to be closer to the problems of several regions in the country. Efforts were being made to overcome some disparities, especially in the interior of the country, where it was more difficult to take children to school. However, all local authorities were trying to ensure that children had transportation to school. It should be noted that some schools had closed because the local inhabitants had moved from the interior of the country to coastal areas. Children from small villages were being transported to other schools. In that connection, he said that efforts were being made to develop inland areas and to attract people to them. The Government was also working to create better conditions for students and for teachers. Its policy was to ensure education for the largest number of children in Portugal.

42. Mr. GOMES PEDRO (Portugal) said that the Portuguese Government was trying to instil an appreciation of the crucial concept of the global approach to protecting the rights of the child in all those whose work related to children's health, including educators, social workers and medical personnel. It followed the same global model in its efforts to deal with the problem of regional disparities in health services and, in particular, in its efforts to reduce the infant mortality rate. But what was seen as primary in the provision of health care was the creation of a culture of respect for the individual and the family.

43. A great upheaval had occurred in 1974, the year of the Portuguese revolution, but Government policy in the areas of education and social services had not been discontinuous in the ensuing years and great progress had been made. For example, between 1984 and 1994, the infant mortality rate had dropped from approximately 17 per thousand to 7.9 per thousand and the vaccination coverage index had risen from 60 per cent to 96.4 per cent.

44. Mr. de SANTA CLARA GOMES (Portugal) said that his delegation welcomed the spirit of the Committee's comments, which had emphasized the ways in which Portugal could better protect the rights of its children. Five main concerns had been expressed. First, the Committee had requested detailed information on the conformity of Portuguese legislation within the Convention, as well as on the practical implementation of such provisions. He assured the Committee that future reports would endeavour to provide a fuller picture and to include, in particular, statistical information pertaining specifically to children. Secondly, the Committee had regretted that NGOs had not taken part in the implementation process; in future, the Portuguese Government would try to remedy that acknowledged weakness. Thirdly, the Committee had recommended that Portugal should enhance the coordination of policies relating to children among the various Government bodies and had suggested that a coordinating body should be set up for that purpose. Fourthly it had recommended that Portugal should develop a focus for its international cooperation, both public and private, with particular emphasis on the child. Portugal's African partners would undoubtedly benefit from assistance in respect of children. Fifthly, the Committee had indicated that, in addressing the broader issue of human rights, Portugal did not pay enough attention to the child per se. The Convention indeed went farther in that regard than other international human rights instruments and Portugal should be encouraged to follow suit.

45. Mrs. SARDENBERG pointed out that the NGOs that participated in the process of implementing the provisions of the Convention should be representative of the diverse sectors of Portuguese society; only thus could a genuinely dynamic process occur.

46. Mr. HAMMARBERG said he wished to add three concerns to those outlined by the Portuguese delegation. In the first place, the Portuguese Government should undertake an in-depth review of the performance of its various authorities in implementing the Convention; secondly, it should adopt a more comprehensive approach to the training and education of professionals who dealt with children, including, for example, a review of child-related curricula; and, thirdly, it should try to develop a more dynamic

interpretation of article 4, paying particular attention to the phrase "the maximum extent of their available resources". Portugal should ask whether it was in fact giving all that it could.

47. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Portuguese delegation to reply to the questions contained in the section of the list of issues entitled "General principles", which read:

"General principles
(Arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12 of the Convention)

8. Please indicate the specific and concrete measures taken to combat discrimination against girls, rural children, children belonging to minorities (including Gypsy children), asylum-seeking children and disabled children, including measures to eliminate and prevent discriminatory attitudes and prejudices.

9. Please provide more information on the regional and social disparities relating to perinatal, neonatal and infant mortality (para. 126 of the report).

10. What concrete measures have been taken to sensitize public opinion and educate personnel working with children about the need to encourage children's participatory rights? Furthermore, what measures, if any, are being taken in the education system to implement article 12 of the Convention both in respect of the child's right to participate in decisions that individually affect him or her and also in respect of the right to participate in the development of school policy and administration?"

48. Mr. ABREU DE LEMOS (Portugal), replying to question 8, said that the Portuguese Constitution provided that every Portuguese citizen was equal to every other, independent of race, sex or religion. That basic principle was reflected in the Framework Act on the Education System, which was based on the principle that unequal circumstances meant unequal opportunities and provided for special assistance to underprivileged children with a view to achieving genuinely equal opportunities. Several special programmes had been launched for that purpose. The first was a youth programme bearing the slogan "All equal, all different", administered through NGOs, particularly those devoted to youth. The second, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, was based on the idea that schooling should be made accessible to all children. It called for a flexible and diversified pedagogical approach, emphasizing the personalized treatment of each child in accordance with his needs, and aimed to improve the quality of the educational experience by providing extra pedagogical support, in the form of special classes designed for special needs, to children from minority communities or to those who were otherwise socially or economically disadvantaged. The third was an intercultural programme, involving, in the current year, the participation of 52 schools in urban areas having sizeable immigrant communities. Illegal immigration was a significant problem; under Portuguese law, the child of an illegal immigrant was not entitled to attend school. School administrations took the approach, however, that all children should receive an education and therefore sought to sidestep the legal obstacles.

49. Mr. de SANTA CLARA GOMES (Portugal) said that the Portuguese were inclined to view themselves as an open and tolerant people and appreciated the richness to be gained from exposure to other cultures. Several recent incidents had shown, however, that Portugal was not wholly free from racist sentiments. The Government was doing its best through educational and cultural measures, to eradicate the "fear of otherness".

50. Mr. GOMES PEDRO (Portugal), replying to question 9, said that regional disparities did exist in the area of health. In 1994, the overall infant mortality rate had been 7.9 per thousand, but, in four districts, that rate had stood at above 10 per thousand. There, too, the Government's approach was global; several strategies had proven particularly useful. For example, a health service coordination system had been set up throughout the country under which administrators, obstetricians, paediatricians, and primary health care providers cooperated in solving problems. In his view, that coordination system should be expanded so that representatives of other sectors could take part in the formulation of a common health strategy. A problem of signal concern was the dearth of health personnel in Portugal's rural districts. Means must be found to encourage health personnel to fill the many vacant posts; the solution to that problem called for national solidarity, one of the Government's touchstone concepts.

51. Mr. ABREU DE LEMOS (Portugal) said that the Government was working to inculcate a culture of democratization and participation. It was well to remember, however, that Portugal had been deprived of its freedom for 50 years; the 20 ensuing years had not proved enough to prepare all members of Portuguese society for full participation. Accordingly, two new courses had been introduced in the schools: the first, entitled "Personal and Social Development", was offered to children who had chosen not to enrol in optional religion courses; and the second, entitled "Civic Education", had been designed to prepare students for citizenship.

52. Before the 1974 revolution, Portuguese schools had been organized on an autocratic and totalitarian basis; the school system had subsequently been reorganized and school administrations were currently elected by teachers and students. In primary schools, the views of children were sometimes sought with respect to procedures affecting them; in secondary schools, students often enjoyed the right to participate in decision-making. A 1982 law provided for State support for youth and student associations.

53. Mrs. GERSÃO (Portugal) said that Portuguese society had made great strides towards democratization in the past two decades. Former family legislation had established a patriarchal and authoritarian family model, which had given the husband authority over his wife and both parents authority over their children. Current family legislation nevertheless provided for an egalitarian family structure, stipulating, for example, that parents should hear their children's view concerning all aspects of family life and should grant autonomy to their children in accordance with the age and maturity of each one. It should be noted that those legislated principles now applied in daily life: a recent poll conducted by the European Values Study Group had determined that parents placed great value on the development of autonomy, personal responsibility and tolerance in their children.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.